

Mulbarton Community Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120990
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358897
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Judi Bedawi

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Nicholls
Headteacher	Stuart Beard
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed six teachers and 11 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspection team held meetings with pupils, representatives of the governing body, staff and the Extended Schools co-ordinator. They observed the school's work, and looked in detail at pupils' books, a range of documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment. The inspectors received and analysed 79 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors investigated the reasons for the 2010 dip in pupil assessments at the end of Year 2.
- The team checked how well different pupil groups achieve and are challenged, including more-able pupils and those from a Travelling background.
- Inspectors explored the impact of extended curriculum activities on pupils' learning and enjoyment.

Information about the school

Mulbarton Infants is a smaller-than-average rural village primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A very few pupils are from different minority ethnic backgrounds including pupils of Travelling heritage. All are fluent in speaking and understanding English. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A low proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. The school's breakfast club has registered provision for 18 pupils between the ages of four and seven years. It is open to all primary age pupils in the local school group, with occasional pre-bookings. Pupils mostly attend from the infant and junior school on the same site. The school has National Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good quality education within a learning community that is strongly focused on securing positive outcomes for all pupils. The headteacher leads by example, steadfast in his ambition to drive the school on to greater heights. This vision is shared by the staff and the governing body, who provide a good balance of support and challenge. Parents and carers express their satisfaction with their children's education by saying, 'We could not wish for a better school', 'I have seen the school grow under the headteacher's holistic approach,' and 'The school is a very happy place, which fosters caring attitudes and has a very balanced approach.'

Current standards throughout the school are above average, having recovered well from the dip in the 2010 assessment results at the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good in reading, writing and mathematics. From the Reception classes onward, there are significant strengths in pupils' thinking, speaking and listening skills, particularly in their use and understanding of a wide vocabulary in response to teachers' questions and when expressing opinions. While opportunities to use basic skills in literacy and mathematics are well embedded across the curriculum, pupils have fewer opportunities to use information and communication technology to develop their interests through independent research and learning.

Pupils like school and, as a result, their attendance is good. Behaviour in lessons and at play is outstanding: pupils offer support and show tolerance towards those who very occasionally have a difficult day. They feel entirely safe, knowing that the adults who care for them exceptionally well will act promptly if necessary. They understand the need for, and adopt, healthy lifestyles. They are enthusiastic in their take-up of the sports opportunities that are provided in and out of school, enhanced through excellent extended activities. The breakfast club is well attended and provides healthy nourishment to start the day. Pupils are involved well in the local community but opportunities to link with pupils from diverse backgrounds in the United Kingdom and to learn more about communities around the world are at an early stage of development.

Good teaching sustains pupils' sense of discovery and enjoyment. Teamwork is a strong feature. Teaching assistants provide good support, not only for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but also for pupils identified as needing focused help, whatever their abilities. Several teaching assistants are trained to help pupils with speech and language difficulties and those who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Assessment information is used well so that work meets pupils' needs and they know their targets. The way children's attainment and progress are recorded in 'learning journeys' in the Early Years Foundation Stage is impressive. The curriculum provides pupils with memorable experiences and is increasingly innovative in its approach. Partnerships to

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promote learning are outstanding, offering many opportunities to expand pupils' personal development.

Senior leaders and managers delegate duties well and ensure that staff have good opportunities for professional development. Teaching is monitored well, but the involvement of all staff with leadership roles in monitoring and self-evaluation is less well established. As a result, they are not all held fully to account for their contribution to pupils' learning. Nevertheless, standards are above average, and pupils' progress and teaching are good. Pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features. Issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed fully and self-evaluation is accurate. This shows that the capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further extend pupils' use of information and communication technology to develop their research and independent learning skills.
- Increase opportunities for all staff with leadership roles to monitor and evaluate others' practice and ensure they become accountable for their areas of responsibility and have a clear impact on pupils' learning.
- Develop community cohesion by finding ways to establish links with communities around the United Kingdom and globally, to increase pupils' awareness of life in other communities that differ from their own experiences

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the Reception classes with attainment that is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Their basic skills in emergent writing, reading and mathematics develop well, aided by learning that is focused on developing their knowledge of letters and sounds and by counting activities. Moving into Year 1, almost all pupils are working at, or above, average although a few take slightly longer to reach their targets. The 2010 dip in assessments at the end of Year 2 was largely due to a lower ability cohort, with less confidence in using subtraction and in their writing skills, combined with higher than usual mobility. Pupils' attainment in speaking, listening and reading is consistently above average, and progress in writing and mathematics accelerates through Years 1 and 2. All pupils, including those from different minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are Travellers, make consistently good progress. This was observed in an outstanding literacy lesson when pupils, including boys and more-able pupils, inspired by watching a live performance of *The Lion King*, wrote their own stories. They followed their story planners closely, used extremely descriptive language and referred to their learning targets. One pupil wrote, 'Once there was a lovely savannah with a flaming sun and a future king.' In a short time, almost all pupils had written one or two pages, rising to the challenges set by their teacher. At the end of the lesson, pupils evaluated each other's work, showing that they had a good understanding of what makes writing interesting and readable.

Pupils behave extremely well, working hard in lessons, often independently, although they have fewer opportunities to follow their own interests when using computers. They play sensibly at break times and enjoy active pursuits like skipping or football in the zoned area, which contribute very well to their adoption of healthy lifestyles. Pupils feel exceptionally safe because bullying is rare. They like learning how to stay safe in the

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community and how to use computers safely. They are proud of school council decisions that have led to better play equipment and are actively involved in promoting safer car parking in the school vicinity and village. Pupils who attend the breakfast club enjoy not only the food, but also the games and activities provided. Pupils have limited opportunities to learn about children living and learning in communities that differ from their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Shared teamwork, close liaison between staff and high expectations are strong features of the good teaching. An increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding, particularly in terms of the pace of lessons, teachers' subject knowledge and the way questioning challenges pupils' thinking skills. Teaching assistants are well trained to support not only pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but also those who are more able. Pupils who have missed learning for various reasons are quickly identified, enabling them to catch up. Occasionally, teachers explanations of lesson activities do not leave enough time for pupils to complete tasks. Lesson planning shows that teachers have appropriately high expectations about the work that different groups of pupils should complete, including Travellers. Teachers make good use of assessment information, tracking and marking to check pupils' progress. They provide pupils with good feedback and, as a result, pupils know their targets, how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

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The curriculum provides pupils with memorable and increasingly innovative ways of learning and acquiring skills. For example, through use of nearby school facilities, Year 2 pupils were invited to the local high school to take part in an 'Engineering Challenge'. Both the curriculum and resources are adapted well and used to meet differing needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works closely with many external agencies such as the Traveller support service and the University of East Anglia to broaden pupils' horizons and experiences. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are about to perform an invigorating dance performance of The Lion King in Norwich city centre. English and mathematics skills are thoroughly embedded in all subjects and topic work. Although information and communication technology is used in most lessons, pupils do not use computers enough to do independent research in areas that interest them. Extended provision, through collaboration with other local schools, enrichment, themed days, the use of visits and visitors, and the high take-up of extra-curricular activities are outstanding. Parents comment positively, saying, 'There is always some extra-curricular activity organised' and 'The extended school facilities are invaluable for working parents and carers.'

Pastoral care, support and guidance underpin pupils' academic progress and personal development extremely well. All staff know their pupils and families very well and work exceptionally hard to remove any barriers to learning so that all pupils are able to thrive. There is immediate support and action taken to support those pupils and families who find themselves in circumstances that make them more vulnerable. Monitoring of attendance and behaviour is closely recorded, with excellent improvement strategies, and plans are shared with pupils and their families when needed. Health and safety matters have a high priority and transition both on initial entry with a full programme of home visits and in preparation for moving to the junior school are greatly valued by parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good and the school is moving forward at a good pace. The staff appreciate the open management of senior leaders that allows them to be fully involved in the school's vision and focus on providing the best possible pupil outcomes. The governing body offers experience and support, challenging decisions made by the headteacher and senior leaders when needed. Its members visit when they can and have a very clear system for following through their good monitoring of school performance. Subject monitoring and evaluation are good, with action plans in place. However, not all staff are fully involved in monitoring, self-evaluation and being accountable for their areas of responsibility. Partnerships with parents, including those who are more reluctant to be

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involved, are good. Many help in school or on trips. A small proportion would like more regular information about their children's progress, but most are happy with the way the school communicates with them and the regular surveys to assess their views. Links and partnerships to promote learning and well-being are excellent. They extend the curriculum opportunities, out-of-school activities and welfare support open to pupils beyond what this small school could otherwise provide. The breakfast club is well managed and run, with a varied healthy menu and strong focus on health, safety and hygiene. All aspects of safeguarding are outstanding, including the governing body overview, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, daily security checks and support for pupils and families who find themselves to be in more vulnerable circumstances.

Although there are strong links with the local area, community cohesion is satisfactory because the school is still developing links across the United Kingdom and globally. The school uses the local school group action plan but has yet to complete its own audit of provision. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. All pupil groups make good progress, pupils and staff treat each other fairly and with mutual respect and pupils know that any form of discrimination is totally unacceptable.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get a good start to their education from the outset, when initial home and school visits enable them to settle quickly. They soon make friends and enjoy the known daily routines. They make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in developing their skills in letter sounds although remembering the letter names can take longer. Counting games and activities consolidate their abilities in early number work. Speaking, listening and use of vocabulary are very significant strengths for all children. When listening to a story about baby owls, one boy said that owls are nocturnal and knew that this meant

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they were awake at night and slept in the day. Learning through play is largely led by children's own interests and so some have to be encouraged to get involved in activities that interest them least. Teaching is good and assistants are used well to support learning. Assessment, through outstanding individual 'learning journeys', provides detailed dated comments on children's progress against the different areas of learning. Children have free access to the outdoor area, which although very small, is used well. The indoor accommodation is large, well resourced and used effectively. Attention to children's welfare and safeguarding is, as in the rest of the school, outstanding. Leadership and management are good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly as are children from Traveller backgrounds who may start school later and have to develop their basic skills. Staff understand the needs of young children well: they have good training opportunities and visit other successful settings. Partnership with parents and carers is good and they are encouraged to become involved in their children's activities. A parent commented, 'We think our child's experience in the Reception class is overwhelmingly positive!'

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were generally positive about all aspects of their children's education. All felt that their children are kept safe. A small proportion felt that behaviour, their children's progress, the way they are informed about it and their suggestions and concerns are addressed are not good enough. The inspection team judged behaviour to be outstanding and progress to be good. Inspectors explored parents' and carers' concerns and found that records indicate appropriate actions to resolve suggestions and concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mulbarton Community Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	71	22	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	62	30	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	35	42	53	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	44	34	43	7	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	56	30	38	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	51	33	42	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	57	32	41	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	25	36	46	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	39	35	44	6	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	35	34	43	8	10	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	34	33	42	7	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	32	41	32	41	6	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	51	35	44	2	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 February 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Mulbarton Community Infant School, Norwich, NR14 8JG

Thank you for giving us such a lovely welcome when we visited your school recently. You told us so much about how much you enjoy learning and we could see that you find it fun and that you work hard. You enjoy all your lessons and like your teachers a lot. Even though you thought hard, there was nothing you disliked about your school. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour, the way you keep healthy and by how safe you feel at school. Keep it up! I especially enjoyed watching those of you practising your Lion King dance and I hope the performance goes well. You go to a good school. This means that you make better progress than pupils in most other infant schools. The adults look after you exceptionally well and this makes you feel very happy. The headteacher and staff want to make your school even better and you can help. I have asked them to do the following;

- to give you more opportunities to use computers independently to find out about things that interest you
- to find ways to help you learn more about how children live in different communities in the United Kingdom and around the world
- to encourage all the staff to check and make sure that the areas of learning that they are responsible for, help you to learn even faster.

You can help your teachers make learning even better by using computers to discover more about things that interest you. You can also share with your teachers your own ideas for learning about how other children live in this country and around the world.

I hope you continue to have fun learning at Mulbarton.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi

Lead inspector

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